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## **Groet uit Java: Picture Postcards and the Transnational Making of the Colony around 1900**

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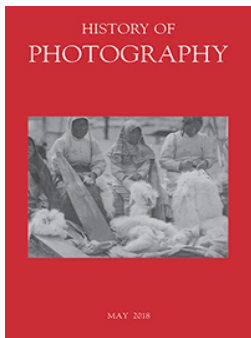


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## *Groet uit Java*: Picture Postcards and the Transnational Making of the Colony around 1900

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# Groet uit Java: Picture Postcards and the Transnational Making of the Colony around 1900

Sophie Junge

This article explores the transnational visual language of picture postcards and the international business networks responsible for producing and disseminating the image of Dutch colonialism around 1900. Following a microhistorical approach, I consider the multilayered representation and transnational production of one particular postcard sent from colonial Indonesia to the Netherlands in 1900. The postcard established, visualised, and catalysed colonialism through its use of a European visual language. Colonialist meaning was attached to the image in Germany and was reinforced through the process of the postcard's delivery from colony to metropolis. This article moves beyond a nation-based framework and instead analyses the meanings of colonial imagery in transnational contexts.

**Keywords:** *Carl Julius Herman Salzwedel (active 1877–1903), picture postcards, travelling photographs, colonial Indonesia, Dutch East Indies, Dutch colonialism, transnational networks, landscape representation*

[Lieve Dora, Je brief gisteren ontvangen. Veel heil en zegen met het nieuwe begonnen jaar, en dat in 1901 al je liefste wensen mogen vervuld worden. Theo en Louise heden op reis gegaan naar Lawong, wij volgen a.[an]s.[taande] Zondag. Nu adieu vele groeten van ons allen, ook aan Mama en Papa van je liefhebbende A:Jen]

[Dear Dora, received your letter yesterday. Much well-being and blessings for the New Year and hopes that all your dearest wishes will come true in 1901. Theo and Louise left today for Lawong, and we will follow them next Sunday. Now adieu and many greetings from all of us, also to Mama and Papa from your loving A: Jen.]

These greetings from Java were written on a picture postcard and sent to a certain Dora Everard in Haarlem, the Netherlands, to wish her a happy New Year for 1901 (figure 1). Mailed on 7 December 1900, the postcard travelled – as four postmarks show on its back side – from the Dutch East Indies via (Batavia-)Maos (8 December) and Weltevreden (9 December) to Haarlem in the Netherlands, where it arrived on 9 January 1901.<sup>1</sup> Attached to the postcard are a two-and-a-half-cent stamp and a five-cent stamp, indicating that the postcard travelled around the globe via the circuits of the Dutch colonial empire (figure 2). On the postcard's front side, four images are mounted next and over each other to represent different views of colonial Java: these include idyllic landscapes of hills and rivers, a spectacular volcano, and the tense scene of a tiger fight. Three captions written in Dutch locate the presented scenes as on the eastern part of the island of Java, naming the

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1 – Two further copies of the postcard are held in the collection of the Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut (IWI) of the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam (inv. no. TM-31003948) and the Atlas van Stolk collection in Rotterdam (inv. no. 70328).



Figure 1. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.



Figure 2. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, back side, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.

2 – The captions read ‘Zandzee en uitbarsting Bromo’, ‘Kajoon (Soerabaia)’, and ‘Grooteweg Tosari’. The term ‘Kajoon’ comes from the Javanese word ‘Kayu’ (Cayu), which means tree or jungle and is also the word for the wayang puppet symbolising the tree of life. On the postcard, the caption refers to the large tree at the side of the river Kali Mas.

mountain Bromo, the health resort Tosari, and the shore of the river Kali Mas with its large old trees (Kajoon), all of which were established as famous sights by the turn of the century.<sup>2</sup> ‘*Groet uit Java*’ (‘Greetings from Java’) is written below the images on the right side of the postcard, printed in thick handwritten black typography with the first letters ‘G’ and ‘J’ coloured in orange. The phrase ‘*Groet*



*uit Java*' defines this particular postcard as one of a series of five sold in 1899 in Soerabaja (Surabaya), the major economic trade city and centre of the sugar industry in eastern Java.

The postcard's lower right corner is left empty for the personal message of the sender, and Dora Everard's address at Spaarne 29 in Haarlem is written on the back in large, forceful letters. In the Netherlands, writing personal messages on the back of a postcard was forbidden before 1905.<sup>3</sup> Up until then, postcards were officially considered text media, although smaller images were introduced on the front side soon after the medium began to be used in 1871 – as seen on the postcard at hand where text and images are clustered together. Five years after the postcard's circulation in 1900, the use of the back side for written commentary was implemented, consolidating the separation between text and image.<sup>4</sup>

The postcard under discussion has four photographic sources for its images, of which three were taken in the 1880s by the photographer Carl Julius Herman Salzwedel. It is part of a large canon of photographic imagery of the former Dutch colony of the East Indies (nowadays Indonesia) constituted in the last decades of the nineteenth century. From the 1860s, a growing number of local photography studios opened in Batavia (Jakarta) and Soerabaja to provide colonial workers, entrepreneurs, and visitors with images of local subjects and themes.<sup>5</sup> But the colony's visibility only increased in a substantial manner with the introduction of photomechanical printing processes around 1900: mass-reproduced halftone prints and collotypes started to circulate on postcards, in illustrated magazines, and in travel books, enabling the distribution of local imagery to international audiences.

This article will focus on the complex meaning of picture postcards from colonial Indonesia through a close reading of the '*Groet uit Java*' postcard. Before its journey to Haarlem, the postcard was designed and printed as a four-colour halftone in Esslingen and Stuttgart in Germany, and then sent to the Dutch colony for sale. As visually complex media, picture postcards need a multidimensional research perspective to reveal their epistemological potential. Postcards are quintessential travelling objects, made to change their location together with their value, function, and the practices connected to them as objects. They accrue value and meaning primarily by changing social facts of ownership and display in different discursive contexts. To grasp the negotiable meaning of these images as representations and objects, Deborah Poole has introduced the concept of a visual economy that conveys the production, circulation, and consumption of images.<sup>6</sup> Travelling through different visual economies, picture postcards have been produced in transnational networks and sent millions of times around the world to render distant colonies and travel destinations visible and to create a comprehensible image of the world for mostly Western recipients.<sup>7</sup> They continue to circulate in archives and exhibitions, at flea markets and collectors' fairs, and as reproductions in academic publications. All of these contexts have determined the significance of the medium's history and the representation of colonial rule at the time of their initial production and circulation.

In this article, I will move beyond national frameworks of research on colonialism and colonial picture postcards that focus on the association between metropolis and colonial periphery. Instead, the article will examine the postcard's production, representation, and circulation as part of a transnational colonial history. Over recent years, a range of transnational approaches have been used to overcome the 'naturalisation of the nation-state' and nation-defined 'container-cultures' as seemingly self-evident concepts.<sup>8</sup> Efforts to move beyond methodological nationalism have been pursued in studies of new imperial history that look for similar dispositions of European imperialism beyond national borders.<sup>9</sup> Instead, transnational approaches emphasise the dynamics of local and multinational networks that cannot be reduced to the relationship between colony and metropolis.<sup>10</sup> While scholarship on British imperialism has been at the forefront of these

3 – Postcards with separate back sides were introduced to the Dutch East Indies around 1906. Leo Haks and Steven Wachlin, *Indonesië: 500 oude prentbriefkaarten*, Rijswijk: Atrium 2005, 16.

4 – In the Netherlands, postcards were introduced in 1871. In 1874, twenty-two countries founded the General Postal Union in Bern, which became the Universal Postal Union in 1878; this development allowed postcards, standardised as 9 cm × 14 cm format, to be sent between all participating nations. H. J. Haverkate, *De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prentbriefkaart: Deel I, Periode 1871–1900*, [Amsterdam]: Vereniging Documentatie Prentbriefkaarten 1987, 5. See also Anett Holzheid, *Das Medium der Postkarte: Eine sprachwissenschaftliche und mediengeschichtliche Studie*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag 2011, 123.

5 – Liesbeth Ouwehand, *Herinneringen in beeld: Fotoalbums uit Nederlands-Indië*, Leiden: KITLV 2009; and *Toekang Portret: 100 jaar fotografie in Nederlands Indië 1839–1939*, ed. Anneke Groeneveld et al., Amsterdam: Fragment 1989.

6 – Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1997, 8–10 and 116.

7 – Monika Burri, *Die Welt im Taschenformat: Die Postkartensammlung Adolf Feller*, Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess 2011, 12.

8 – Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological Nationalism and the Study of Migration', *European Journal of Sociology*, 43:3 (August 2002), 221. See also Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, 'Introduction', in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, Berlin: De Gruyter 2014, 2–3.

9 – See, for example, Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, New York: Norton 2014; and *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660–1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004.

10 – Susan Legêne and Martijn Eickhoff, 'Postwar Europe and the Colonial Past in Photographs', in *Transnational Memory*, ed. De Cesari and Rigney, 194. See also *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2011.

11 – Exceptions are Remco Raben, *Wie spreekt voor het koloniale verleden? Een pleidooi voor transkolonialisme*, Inaugural Lecture, 28 September 2016, University of Amsterdam. See also *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy*, ed. John M. MacKenzie, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2011; and Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016.

12 – Bernhard C. Schär, *Tropenliebe: Schweizer Naturforscher und niederländischer Imperialismus in Südostasien um 1900*, Frankfurt: Campus 2015, 13.

13 – My research has been inspired by Lucy Lippard's critical analysis of one particular picture postcard of the native American Beaver family, taken by the photographer Mary Schäffer in 1906. Lippard works carefully with the postcard's content and composition to reveal its layers of meaning, exploring not only its historical context and the subjective relations between photographer and protagonists, but also the relation between the historical photograph and herself. See Lucy R. Lippard, 'Doubletake: The Diary of a Relationship with an Image' (1991), in *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, London: Routledge 2003, 342–53.

14 – Haks and Wachlin, *Indonesië*; and Marcel Bonneff and Stephen Grant, 'Bons baisers de Batavia': Cartes postales des Indes Néerlandaises', *Archipel*, 47 (1994), 53–85.

15 – Haverkate, *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prentbriefkaart: Deel I*. See also Felix Axster, *Koloniales Spektakel in 9 x 14: Bildpostkarten im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Bielefeld: transcript 2014; and Eva Tropper, 'Bild/Störung: Beschriebene Postkarten um 1900', *Fotogeschichte*, 118 (2010), 5–16.

16 – Holzheid, *Medium der Postkarte*; Timm Starl and Eva Tropper, 'Zeigen, Grüßen, Senden: Editorial', *Fotogeschichte*, 118 (2010), 3–4; and Roberto Zaugg, 'Zwischen Europäisierung und Afrikanisierung: Zur visuellen Konstruktion der Kapverden auf kolonialen Postkarten', *Fotogeschichte*, 118 (2010), 17–28.

17 – Enrico Sturani, 'Das Fremde im Bild: Überlegungen zur historischen Lektüre kolonialer Postkarten', *Fotogeschichte*, 21:79 (2001), 17–18.

18 – Susie Protschky, *Images of the Tropics: Environment and Visual Culture in Colonial Indonesia*, Leiden: KITLV 2011, 9–22.

19 – Axster, *Koloniales Spektakel*, 20.

concerns, the Dutch colonies of Southeast Asia have received little academic attention and even fewer studies have focused on the visual history of colonialism in this context.<sup>11</sup> To address this research lacuna, I will propose the concept of a shared visual language that was produced and circulated both within the Dutch colony and beyond its borders.

My argument is based on the ideas of such scholars as Bernhard Schär who read late nineteenth-century colonialism as the history of a European bourgeoisie that was locally and globally connected. Instead of discrete nation-states, European elites and their networks produced a 'culture of colonialism' that crossed national borders.<sup>12</sup> To overcome the historiographical national framework of Dutch colonial visual history, I will examine in detail the particular 'Groet uit Java' postcard mentioned earlier.<sup>13</sup> As is the case with most commonplace, mass-produced images, picture postcards have not yet been fully recognised as rich sources of knowledge about the production and dissemination of colonial representations. Few scholars have dealt with the history of the picture postcard in the Netherlands, let alone in the former Dutch colonies. The studies by Leo Haks and Steven Wachlin, and by Marcel Bonneff and Stephen Grant, are based on private collections and attempt to index their material quantitatively.<sup>14</sup> As with the earliest attempts to write histories of the Dutch picture postcard, these studies stress the medium's popularity in the context of colonial expansion around 1900.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, these studies focus on national accomplishments in postcard production and link the medium to the technical achievements of the Netherlands. My intention here is neither to write yet another postcard history of European nation-states nor a history strictly focused on the medium itself; instead, in retracing aesthetic and economic connections to the global postcard market, I intend to contribute to the ongoing discussion of transnational approaches towards both globally circulating imagery and European colonialism around 1900.

In current art and photo-historical research, there has been a general neglect of the iconography of picture postcards. Since the 1990s, most scholars have concentrated on the medium's social and cultural relevance, the history of its technical development, and its medial specificities as image-text object.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, scholars like Enrico Sturani have criticised a search for source images, the neglect of the postcard's social biography, and the different functions of the medium as a visual document, a personal souvenir, or a mass-reproduced piece of commercial graphic design.<sup>17</sup> Here, the importance of context for the meaning of picture postcards is by no means ignored. However, this article emphasises the relevance of source images as not only offering insights into iconographic and compositional decisions in their redeployment in picture postcards, but also of the visual and ideological interpretations of European colonies at the turn of the century.

### Picturing the Colony

In the four pictures on the 'Groet uit Java' postcard, the island of Java is depicted in a manner that fulfilled Western clichés of 'the tropics' as a region located somewhere on the other side of the world.<sup>18</sup> Picturesque landscapes and exotic rituals mark the foreign location's otherness for European recipients of the postcard. But by focusing on the postcard's individual subjects – on the combination of pictures, text, and personal message – this article emphasises that its representations were not geared narrowly towards the object of its specific depiction. Instead, the postcard produced an image first and foremost rendering a European claim to power comprehensible to metropolitan audiences as well as creating a positive political message of colonial annexation by nation-states such as the Netherlands.<sup>19</sup> With its commonplace imagery, the postcard focused less on the specificity of individual places and more on presenting a familiar and safe image of 'the colony'. This specific postcard was part of a reliable canon of colonial place imagery that has continued to shape perceptions of Java beyond national iconographies.

The central picture on this 'Groet uit Java' postcard represents a ceremonial tiger killing (*rampok macan*), practised at Central and East Javanese courts since the sixteenth century. The ceremony took place at the *alun-alun*, the outermost part of the court (*kraton*) which functioned as a transitional area between the outer world of the city and the inner world of the *kraton*.<sup>20</sup> The scene's setting is a large open sandy area surrounded by a crowd of people. In the first rows, men hold lances and spears not only to protect the audience but also eventually to kill the tiger. These tiger fights were regularly held to celebrate the end of Ramadan. Robert Wessing describes how the royal ritual slowly lost its religious character and came to function as public entertainment during the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> On the postcard, the rectangular landscape-format image shows the tiger in the right foreground with its head lowered. Due to the image's perspective it is uncertain whether the animal's attention is focused on the wooden box or the surrounding crowd of people ready to attack with their spears. The small wooden box is the last one still closed in a row of five or six. According to Wessing's detailed description of the sequence of these fights, a tiger would have been released from each box and killed in turn.<sup>22</sup> The remains of the other boxes lie in pieces on the ground, as if remnants of the fight.

By the turn of the century, such tiger fights had become well known in the Netherlands. In March 1899 *Eigen haard*, a Dutch periodical for middle-class readers, stated in an article that 'what is understood by "rampok" is also rather generally known in the motherland'.<sup>23</sup> The informed viewer would thus have recognised the ritual as a symbolic restoration of social order in which the tiger represented the 'spiritual antithesis to civilised life' and community, or the wild, uncontrolled part of the ruler's identity that the people had to kill to establish order.<sup>24</sup> Even uninformed readers would have recognised the danger and aggression of the scene through the many lances and spears of the crowd pointing towards the viewer.

The reddish colour of the *alun-alun* connects the postcard's central scene with an adjacent small image representing the eruption of Mount Bromo. Reminiscent of a peephole, the circular picture is mounted over the lower left corner of the central image. The upper half of the picture is bound by a narrow frame, around which the caption 'Sand Sea and erupting Bromo' is placed; the lower part of the image fades away, leaving its completion to the viewer's imagination. Eva Tropper has underlined this specific compositional feature of printed picture postcards, interpreting the framed or unbound, or the faded or contoured picture as representative of its status as simultaneously both independent image and a part of the postcard's pictorial whole.<sup>25</sup>

A gentle panoramic landscape of Tosari ('*Grooteweg Tosari*') occupies almost the entire space of the postcard around the central image. On the right side, a path passes a small dwelling and leads into the hilly landscape behind. Two men, both wearing long white garments and turbans, stand on the path in apparent conversation. On the postcard's left side, some bamboo with a monkey – possibly a macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) common to Java – frame the landscape. The blue and green tones of this view correspond with another idyllic landscape below the framed image of the tiger fight, which shows a large tree on the shore of the river Kali Mas in Soerabaja. On a small boat, two ferryman are coloured dark brown and wear only white cloths around their waists, with two more passengers standing at the rear. They are depicted only as contours and thus appear as white as do some of the individuals in the audience of the tiger fight.

The content and empty pictorial spaces of the postcard distance the scenes from the viewer and function as conceptual spaces of colonial order.<sup>26</sup> European colonialism, mediated through the 'naturalness' of European landscape conventions, 'could find itself confirmed by a real place [colonial Java] understood to be in a state of nature'.<sup>27</sup> Java remains a generic site caught between the dangerous and the idyllic in this postcard, but primarily represented at a safe distance. The nonspecific representations deny political conflict and erase the voices – and literally the faces – of the 'dark printed' subjects. By circa 1900, Mount Bromo, the riverbanks, and the village of Tosari – a popular excursion destiny and health resort – had become famous sights, as evident in the remarkable number of postcards and illustrations of these sites.<sup>28</sup>

20 – Robert Wessing, 'A Tiger in the Heart: The Javanese Rampok Macan', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 148:2 (1992), 300. Karin Peterson points out that the photographed tiger fight must have taken place in Blitar or Kediri, provinces of Jawa Timur, since tigers were already extinct elsewhere on Java by 1900. Karin Peterson, *In het voetspoor van Louis Couperus: Pasoeroean door de lens van Salzwedel*, Amsterdam: KIT Publishers 2009, 30.

21 – Wessing, 'Tiger in the Heart', 288.

22 – Ibid., 288–92.

23 – Bintang Djaoeh, 'Rampok', *Eigen haard*, 9 (4 March 1899), 132: 'Wat men onder "rampok" verstaat, is ook in het moederland vrij algemeen bekend'.

24 – Robert Wessing, 'The Last Tiger in East Java: Symbolic Continuity in Ecological Change', *Asian Folklore Studies*, 54:2 (1995), 202–03.

25 – Tropper, 'Bild/Störung', 9.

26 – Around 1900, the subject of landscape was incorporated into photography, picture postcards, and so-called 'Mooi Indië' paintings – natural-realist impressions of 'the tropics' with panoramic perspectives – to show empty and timeless landscapes that once again functioned as a conceptual space for such European endeavours. See Protschky, *Images of the Tropics*, 85–87; and Susie Protschky, 'Environment and Visual Culture in the Tropics: The Netherlands Indies c. 1830–1949', in *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie, London: Routledge 2014, 385–86.

27 – W. J. T. Mitchell, 'Imperial Landscape', in *Landscape and Power* (1994), ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2002, 18.

28 – See, for example, Th. J. A. Hilers, 'Een Voetreis naar de Zandzee en de Bromo', *De Aarde en haar volken* (1899), 161–74; Official Tourist Bureau, *Illustrated Guide to East Java, Bali and Lombok*, Weltevreden: Official Tourist Bureau 1914; and the postcard 'Tosari: Kampong nabij het hôtél', ed. J. M. Chs. Nijland (inv. no. 1405782), KITLV Collection.





Figure 3. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Atlas Van Stolk, Rotterdam.



Figure 4. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.

Like this 'Groet uit Java' postcard, the four other examples in the series combine vignettes of Java's landscapes, exotic rituals, relics from Javanese culture, and studio photographs of indigenous people with images representative of colonial economic power, such as the two-storey warehouse of F. W. Krapp who sold the postcard series in Soerabaja. All of the postcards suggest a connection to the





Figure 5. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.

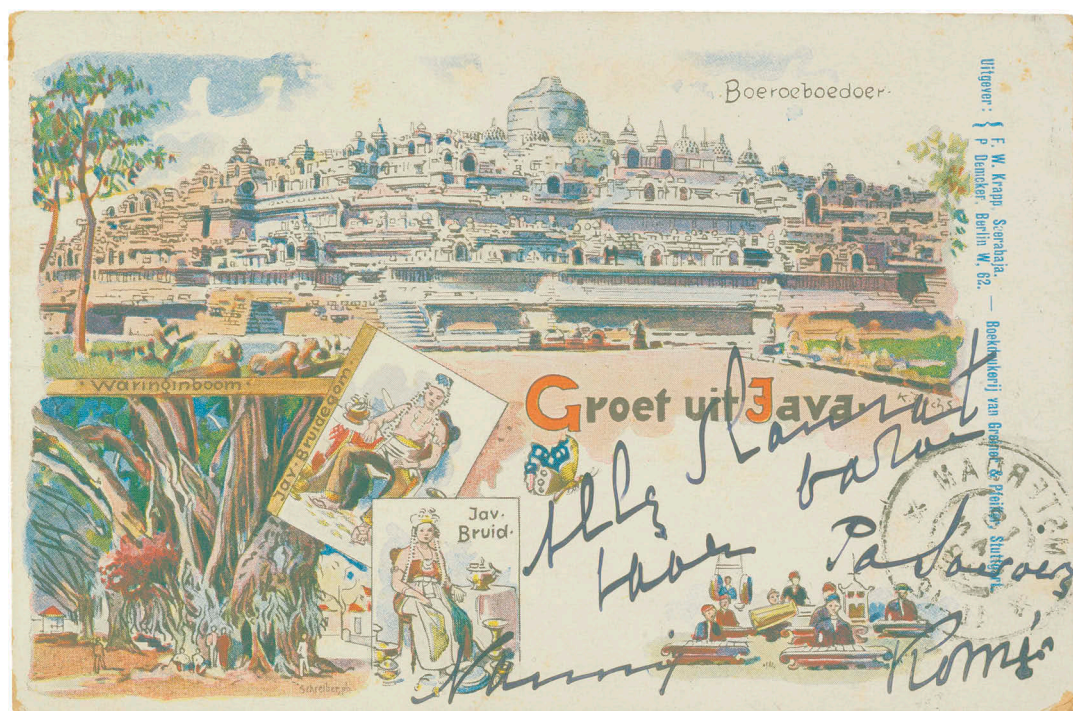


Figure 6. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard, four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.

Netherlands by using flags or the likeness of the young Queen Wilhelmina (1880–1962) along with Dutch-language captions (figures 3–6). The Queen’s oval portrait is used on two of the postcards, complemented with small emblems of a crown and national colours, which refer to her enthronement in September 1898. The frequency of these chosen themes in the postcard collections of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) at the Leiden

29 – On Soerabaja and the history of its trade and population, see Gert Oostindie, 'Migration and its Legacies in the Dutch Colonial World', in *Dutch Colonialism: Migration and Cultural Heritage*, ed. Gert Oostindie, Leiden: KITLV 2008, 5–7. See also Amada Achmadi, 'A Changing Scene', *Fabrications*, 24:1 (2014), 4–25.

30 – I have identified sixteen out of twenty-two photographs used as the sources for the five picture postcards; twelve photographs were taken by Salzwedel and one by Kassian Céphas. For the sources of the principal postcard under discussion, see notes 38–41. For postcard inv. no. 70324 (Atlas van Stolk collection), see KITLV-82832, KITLV-50335, KITLV-82790, and TM-31002009. For postcard inv. no. 70325 (Atlas van Stolk), see KITLV-113952. For postcard inv. no. 70326 (Atlas van Stolk), see KITLV-82885, KITLV-12225, and KITLV-19173. For postcard inv. no. 70327 (Atlas van Stolk), see KITLV-82773, KITLV-151275, KITLV-28525, TM-60042310, and TM-60042309.

31 – Steven Wachlin, 'Salzwedel', in *In het voetspoor*, ed. Peterson, 114. See also Gerda Theuns-de Boer and Saskia Asser, *Isidore van Kinsbergen: Fotopionier en theatermaker in Nederlands-Indië*, Zaltbommel: Uitgeverij Aprilis; Leiden: KITLV 2005.

32 – Gael Newton, 'Silver Streams: Photography Arrives in Southeastern Asia 1840s–1880s', in *Garden of the East: Photography in Indonesia 1850s–1940s*, ed. Gael Newton, Canberra: National Gallery of Australia 2014, 28.

33 – For a list of photography studios, see Steven Wachlin, 'Commerciële fotografen en fotostudio's in Nederlands-Indië 1850–1940: Een overzicht', in *Toekang Portret*, ed. Groeneveld et al., 177–92.

34 – Salzwedel won several medals at exhibitions such as the *Batavian Planten- en Dierentuin Tentoonstelling* in 1884 and the *Tentoonstelling te Soerabaya* in 1893. Wachlin, 'Salzwedel', 114–15. See also the back side of the *carte de visite*, inv. no. 60060167, Tropenmuseum.

35 – See, for example, Heinrich Versnel advertisement, *Soerabaijisch handelsblad* (22 August 1900), and reproduced photographs from the studio of Hermann Salzwedel in Johan Ernst Jasper, 'Priggen en omstreken', *Eigen haard*, 43 (22 October 1898), 680–84; and *Eigen haard*, 45 (5 November 1898), 708–11.

36 – For a detailed description of the entire process, see Dorothea Peters, 'Ein Bild sagt mehr als 1000 Punkte: Zur Geschichte, Technik und Ästhetik der Autotypie', *Rundbrief Fotografie: Sammeln – Bewahren – Erschließen – Vermitteln*, 4 (1998), 23–29.

37 – See Nijland advertisement of picture postcards for five cents per card in *Soerabaijisch handelsblad* (10 December 1903), n.p.

University Libraries and the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam points to the series as displaying a standard repertoire of colonial imagery.

### *Translating Photographs into Prints*

On this particular picture postcard, a set of four representations was chosen to constitute an image of colonial Java (figure 1). The translation of photographs into prints emphasised a national reading of the chosen images. Indeed, the postcard confirmed the European image of a 'colony' as well as the national character of colonialism itself. Visual references to Dutch colonialism could safely be made since the Netherlands was not regarded as a serious rival to Germany where the postcard series was produced. Moreover, economic interests guided the transnational business enterprise; the postcards were provided with Dutch inscriptions and imagery to serve the local postcard market in Soerabaja, with its mostly Dutch-speaking colonial society.<sup>29</sup>

Three of the four pictures on the postcard – and sixteen of twenty-two for the postcard series as a whole – derive from photographs taken in the 1880s by the commercial photographer Herman Salzwedel.<sup>30</sup> The photographer is not credited on the postcard because he did not have any copyright claim, having long since left Soerabaja. Salzwedel had arrived in Batavia from Singapore in May 1877. Together with the photographer, painter, and lithographer Isidore van Kinsbergen, he opened a photographic studio in Batavia in March 1878.<sup>31</sup> Like many other European photographers, Salzwedel came to the Dutch East Indies to seek his fortune after the worldwide economic depression of the 1870s.<sup>32</sup> Competition developed not only as a result of the growing number of photographers, but also because Salzwedel and his counterparts, Ohannes Kurkdjian (active between 1890 and 1905) in Soerabaja and Woodbury & Page (between 1857 and 1910) in Batavia, offered the same set of images apparent in the postcard series.<sup>33</sup>

Salzwedel opened his own studio in Soerabaja in May 1879 and moved to Passar Besar, the centre of expatriate life in the city, in 1880. Salzwedel offered the whole range of products of commercial studio photography: *cartes de visite* and portraits, photographs of landscapes and plantations, town views, and 'views and types of Soerabaja and its surroundings'.<sup>34</sup> Around 1885, Salzwedel sold the studio and all its negatives to Willem Schmedes and left the colony; in 1889, he opened a studio in Shanghai but his whereabouts and activities are not known after 1894. Schmedes, however, retained the studio name 'Salzwedel' and sold it on again in 1894 to Heinrich Wilhelm Adrian Versnel, who had worked as Schmedes's assistant from 1890. By 1900, the studio was well established, circulating its photographs within the colony and well beyond. Versnel made souvenir albums, sold photographs and clichés (printing plates) to magazines such as *Eigen haard*, and published picture postcards as well.<sup>35</sup>

Three of Salzwedel's photographs are sources for the 'Groet uit Java' postcard under discussion here. By 1900, halftone printing was used to reproduce photographs in combination with text. In the case of the production process of this postcard, the four photographs were copied and combined into a single drawing, and then photomechanically rendered into a relief cliché to be printed on a letterpress.<sup>36</sup> In order to print in colour, printing plates were required for each colour – yellow, magenta, cyan, and black – which were then printed over each other. The translation from photography to drawing to mechanical four-colour print was technically challenging, and indeed most 'Greetings from' postcards in the KITLV collection are printed in monochrome halftones. At a price of ten cents, the 'Groet uit Java' postcard was double the cost of a noncoloured collotype postcard sold by another publisher from Soerabaja, J. M. Chs. Nijland.<sup>37</sup>



Alongside the exceptional production process, the combination of images and text and various manipulations assist the colonial viewer's interpretation of the postcard. The photograph of the tiger fight, with its colour differentiation between colonisers and colonised in the crowd, offers a good example of the reworking that took place here. Another example of such strategic changes includes the removal of two closed wooden boxes compared to the albumen photograph from the 1870s (figure 7).<sup>38</sup> This simple reduction may have been undertaken to provide sufficient space on the postcard for the overlapping circular image of Mount Bromo. Nevertheless, this alteration also increased the overall tension of the scene. Although the other animals in the photograph are still in their boxes, their removal from the postcard raises the drama as viewers witness the penultimate or final fight of the ceremony. Such heightening of the spectacle through selective alterations is also apparent in the image of Mount Bromo. While the photograph shows four people and two horses spread across the plateau in front of the smoking volcano (figure 8), these bystanders have been removed from the postcard to emphasise the danger and desolation of the scene.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, the postcard's other landscapes have been supplemented with figures. In the Tosari view, two men have been added to the foreground as reference points for the viewer (figure 9).<sup>40</sup> Other bystanders on the path have been removed to create an open view on the postcard. The boating figures in the riverside scene have also been added, the boat in the photograph being blurred and unrecognisable due to the exposure time of the moving subject (figure 10).<sup>41</sup> Finally, the tree beneath the river has been enlarged on the postcard in order to provide a circular compositional counterbalance to the view of the volcano.

Alongside such manipulations, the use of colour charges the postcard with ideological meaning by highlighting specific subjects. In the sepia-coloured, monochrome albumen print, the bystanders at the tiger fight are recognisable as individuals dressed either in dark or light clothes. On the postcard, in contrast, noncoloured 'white people' stand out from the otherwise dark surrounding crowd – a technical effect that reproduces the social division between coloniser and colonised (figures 11 and 12). As if to assert colonial rule, colour also accentuates, indeed identifies, the Dutch flags on the right. While these flags are hardly visible in the photograph, the addition of their national colours locates the scenes within the territorial dominion of Dutch rule. In this manner, the translation of the source photographs into the postcard emphasises colonial hierarchies. While Jens Jäger argues that the iconography of postcards is always charged with national significance,<sup>42</sup> the choices of colouring and retouching evident in the 'Groet uit Java' postcard leave no room to question or avoid the political reality of Dutch rule in colonial Java. The postcard's imagery thus creates its own ideological cosmos which directs the viewer's reading as one that asserts and legitimates colonial occupation.

### Travelling Objects and Iconic Images

In its iconography and framing, the postcard we are considering neglects local information. Instead, it is the handwritten message that connects the foreign place with the personal space of sender and receiver. This paradoxical relation between a generic representation of a distant place and a personal connection with it (through the written message) is decisive for the interpretation and worldwide success of picture postcards around 1900. It turns the visually unspecific postcard – itself mass produced and reminiscent of numerous others – into a comprehensible and personal communicative medium that enters the intimate space of sender and addressee. While the personal message and signature turn the reproduced image into a unique object, 'adding sound to the senses of touch and sight already engaged' as Geoffrey Batchen has pointed out,<sup>43</sup> these individualising practices are themselves commonplace and standardised. Photographic objects as picture postcards thus occupy a liminal space between the public and the private.

38 – The photograph of the tiger fight is part of the collection of the Tropenmuseum: as an albumen print, dated 1877–92 (inv. no. TM-60005106 and TM-60025896); as a photograph on resin-coated paper, dated 1877–92 (inv. no. TM-33006349); and as a picture postcard, printed as a collotype, dated 1900–23 (inv. no. TM-60046712).

39 – The photograph of Mount Bromo is part of the collection of the KITLV and the Tropenmuseum: as a photograph dated before 1880 (inv. no. KITLV-15005, KITLV-15671, KITLV-53107, KITLV-19685, and KITLV-154752); as an albumen print dated before 1880 (inv. no. KITLV-82791 and KITLV-82792); as an undated picture postcard, printed as a collotype (inv. no. KITLV-1401321, KITLV-1401344, and KITLV-1406555); and as a silver gelatin print, dated 1890–99 (inv. no. TM-10004102).

40 – The photograph of Tosari is part of the collection of the KITLV and the Tropenmuseum: as an albumen print, dated around 1880 (inv. no. KITLV-114633 and KITLV-151313); as a picture postcard, printed as a collotype, dated around 1910 (inv. no. KITLV-18126); and as a silver gelatin print, dated 1890–99 (inv. no. TM-60007556 and TM-10002205).

41 – The photograph of the Kajoon is part of the collection of the KITLV and the Tropenmuseum: as an albumen print, dated 1870–92/ca. 1880 (inv. no. TM-60005131 and KITLV-105831); and as a photograph dated around 1890 (KITLV-6423, KITLV-12354, and KITLV-79869).

42 – Jens Jäger, "Heimat" in Afrika: Oder: Die mediale Aneignung der Kolonien um 1900', *zeitenblicke*, 7:2 (2008), available at [http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2008/2/jaeger/index\\_html](http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2008/2/jaeger/index_html) (accessed 2 April 2018).

43 – Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press 2004, 47 and 96.





Figure 7. Herman Salzwedel, *Een Tigergevecht*, albumen print from collodion-on-glass negative, 1877-92. Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. TM-60005106.



Figure 8. Herman Salzwedel, *De Zandzee en de Bromo in het Tengger-gebergte*, albumen print from collodion-on-glass negative, before 1880. Leiden University Library, KITLV-82792.





Figure 9. Herman Salzwedel, *Groote Weg te Tosari bij Pasoeroean*, albumen print from collodion-on-glass negative, before 1880. Leiden University Library, KITLV-82786.



Figure 10. Unknown photographer, *Kajoon te Soerabaja*, albumen print, around 1890. Leiden University Library, KITLV-105831.



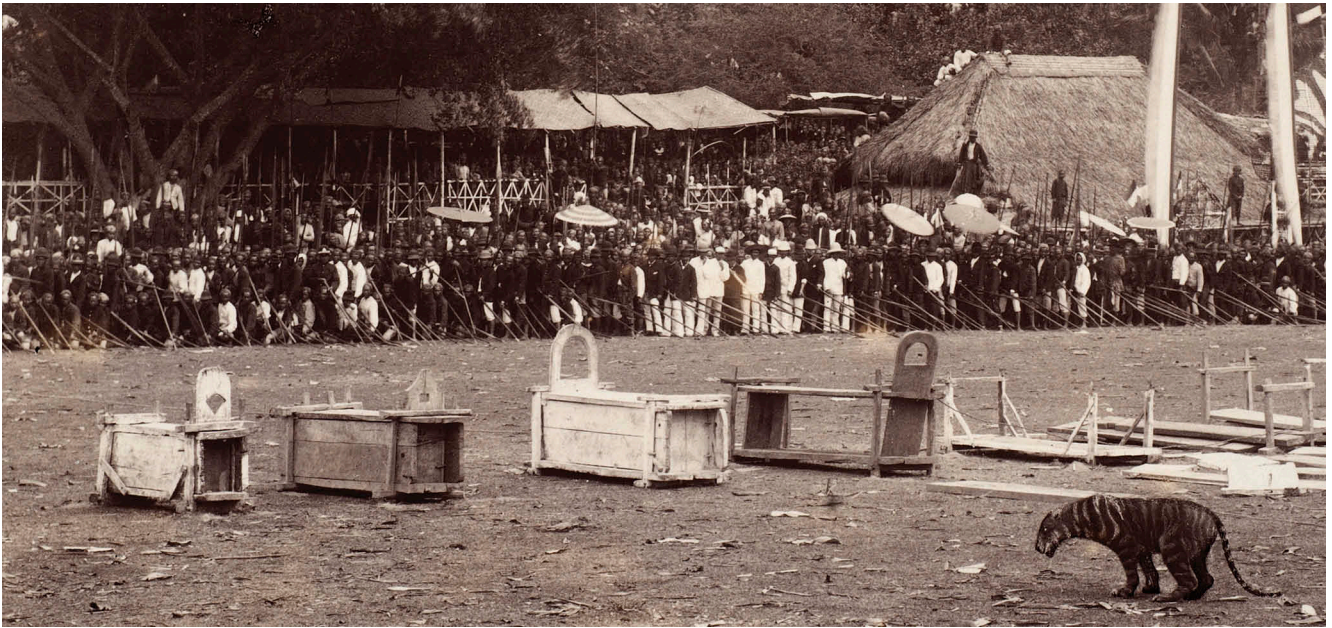


Figure 11. Herman Salzwedel, *Een Tigervecht*, albumen print (detail), 1877-92. Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. TM-60005106.

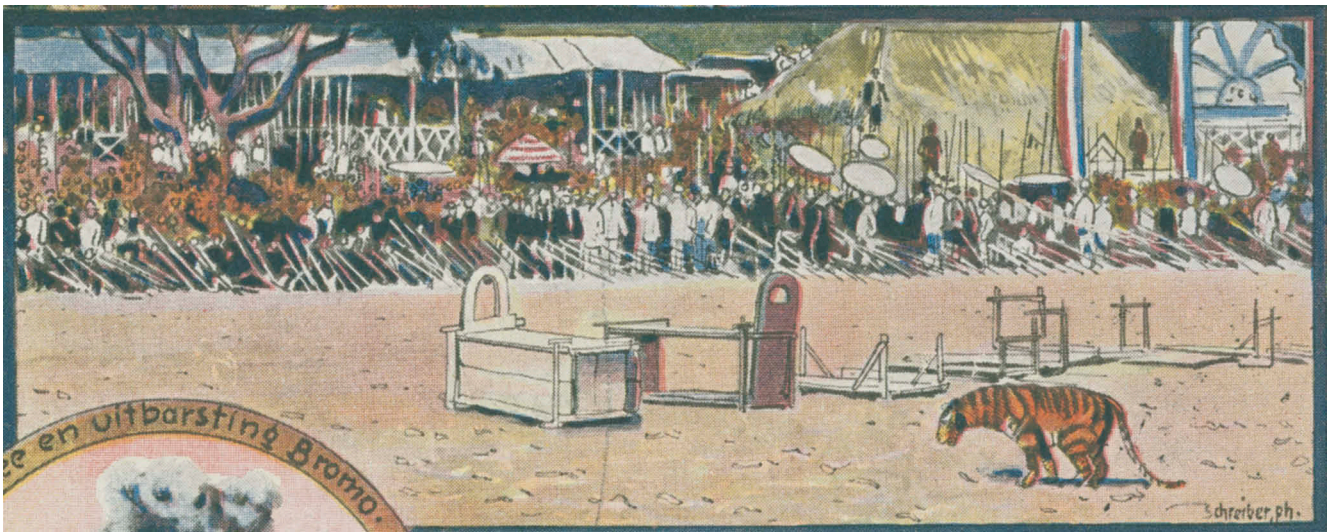


Figure 12. *Groet uit Java*, ed. F. W. Krapp and P. Demcker, picture postcard (detail), four-coloured halftone print, 1899. Private collection.

Since the printed images have been divorced from their photographic sources, it is text that reestablishes the postcard's evidential character. As a medium consisting of image and text, picture postcards carry a specific indexicality that intensifies the paradoxical relation between the emptiness of the image and its representational power. While this particular postcard made use of a shared commercial pictorial language to denote colonial Java, the written text made this pictorial commodity highly personal. Unlike a photograph, the picture postcard disconnects the image from its signifier through the translation of the photographic reference into a printed image. Where the indexical character of the photograph is undermined, the iconic ability of the text reconnects the postcard to the colony. Even the handwriting functions as an index that connects the postcard with the sender's body and thus reestablishes the indexical claims of the visual object.<sup>44</sup>



While the sender's written message and the printed captions connect the postcard with a foreign place, stamps and postmarks are evidence of the experience of travel. As objects with tactile and haptic qualities, these postcards travelled from one person to another through different spaces and networks.<sup>45</sup> The postcard's status as a material object of exchange is closely related to its social biography as a commodity for sale in Soerabaja, as a postal item en route to Haarlem, and as a souvenir kept by Dora Everard.<sup>46</sup> Its particular authenticity is due to its status as a travelling object carrying the experience of a geographical journey and reliably connecting a foreign place with a metropolitan centre. The hybrid relation between safe distance and personal connection can only emerge through that journey. Karin Walter has argued that the popularity of picture postcards was due to their ability to substitute for travel.<sup>47</sup> As objects of exchange they made the recipient feel engaged in travel, as the purchase, exchange, and sending of postcards connected the recipient to the experience of travel and tourism.<sup>48</sup> Although this perspective seems persuasive, the tension between proximity and distance also played a major role in the popularity of picture postcards.

To what extent did these images – itinerant both in terms of geography and medium – determine the significance and visibility of colonial space? To grasp the full historical and ideological meaning of postcards, we need to move beyond a narrow focus on the materiality of postcards as pictorial objects. As image carriers, the postcard travelled across different media – a phenomenon generally neglected in current research on transnational and transcolonial movements of people and concepts.<sup>49</sup> Salzwedel's photographs of Mount Bromo and of the tiger fight had a long lifetime, circulating on postcards, as single photographs and in souvenir albums, and in magazines and illustrated tourist guidebooks. They continue today to constitute a specific canonical representation of the former colony, and as such became iconic not because of their specific content but through use and reuse over a long period of time.

Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites have characterised iconic photographs as accessible visual commonplaces experienced within the routine of everyday life. This understanding of 'images known for being known' applies well to iconic representations of the colony of the Dutch East Indies.<sup>50</sup> Whereas reproduced images in periodicals and books reached a limited group of mostly bourgeois subscribers and readers, picture postcards were sent and seen by millions within the colony and beyond its borders. The small, readily mobile medium was the most popular carrier of reproductions at the turn of the century, reaching transnational audiences as the multilingual inscriptions on their back sides indicate.<sup>51</sup> Sights such as the village of Tosari and Mount Bromo must have been locally recognised as landmarks for the colony's inhabitants and hence as appropriate representations of their environment. At the same time, postcards were also being produced for a growing tourist market that desired spectacular imagery. Images such as the tiger fight needed no postcard caption because the subject was self-evident, being both well known in the colony and attractive to tourists. The continuous reuse of the same images in different media constituted a visual repertoire that was simultaneously specific and nonspecific, and adaptable through changing contexts and meanings.

To summarise, Karin Walter's observation that postcards represent principal sights and attractions should be reappraised.<sup>52</sup> Early postcards such as the '*Groet uit*' series were themselves responsible for creating the popularity of certain sights through their continual reproduction and circulation. Only a small set of recurrent subjects in different publications and contexts created a specific canon of images that made the colony visible. In this way, the foreign place became 'safe by becoming image'.<sup>53</sup> Postcards did not produce new knowledge about the colony; rather, they were meant to lead to the acceptance of Western domination in colonised places and societies.

45 – See, for example, Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, Oxford: Berg 2001, 108–09; and Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the Material Performance of the Past', *History and Theory*, 48 (December 2009), 130–50.

46 – Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986, 16.

47 – Karin Walter, 'Die Ansichtskarte als visuelles Massenmedium', in *Schund und Schönheit: Populäre Kultur um 1900*, ed. Kaspar Maase and Wolfgang Kaschuba, Cologne: Böhlau 2001, 46–61.

48 – Holzheid, *Medium der Postkarte*, 252 and 260.

49 – As an example of such neglect, see *Comparing Empires*, ed. Leonhard and von Hirschhausen. For an exception, see *Transnational Memory*, ed. De Cesari and Rigney.

50 – Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2007, 2 and 12.

51 – See, for example, the postcard 'Tosari. Weg naar de Bromo-krater', ed. J. M. Chs. Nijland, with inscriptions in Javanese, Dutch, and Malay on the back side (inv. no. 14001339, KITLV Collection).

52 – Walter, 'Die Ansichtskarte', 53.

53 – Peter D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000, 109.

## Making Postcards in Germany

Having traced the travel route of the postcard and the circulation of the individual images in the 'Groet uit Java' collage, I want to consider the transnational context for the production of the postcard in Soerabaja and in Germany. Before the postcard was sent to its destination in Haarlem and then onwards to the Amsterdam archives, the images circulated in a 'double pendulum movement'<sup>54</sup> from Soerabaja to Stuttgart and back again to Soerabaja. The history of the postcard's production is relevant because it provides an understanding of the complex relation between the postcard's national significance and its production within professional networks.

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the Dutch East Indies profited from the new travel routes and the increased exchange of actors, commodities, and ideas among imperial systems. As printed pictorial objects, the particular series of postcards came into being through these complex commercial arrangements and knowledge networks, which together participated in its visual economy.<sup>55</sup> Photographers, graphic artists who retouched and translated the photographic image into a printing plate, printers who reproduced the postcards on the letterpress, and both print shops and bookshops which sold the postcards all over the world took part in the production process. Accordingly, all these actors and their institutions – with the notable exception of the photographic studio Salzwedel – are mentioned on the postcard's front side. Three names are printed in blue letters on the postcard's right edge: the publishers 'F. W. Krapp, Soerabaja' and 'P. Demcker, Berlin W. 62', and the printers 'van Greiner & Pfeiffer, Stuttgart'. Printed signatures on the postcard include the names 'Schreiber, Ph.' in the lower right corner of the central image and 'K. Fuchs' at the lower left base of the bamboo branches.<sup>56</sup> This latter signature is in the same cursive style as the captions, which suggests that Fuchs was responsible for the overall design of the postcard series and arranged the text and the scenes to create a unified image of colonial Java.

For the Dutch postcard business, the year 1892 marked an important caesura. In that year the Dutch postal service lost its monopoly on postcard production and the market thus opened to private publishers, many of which were foreign. Germany was the leading producer of picture postcards between 1870 and 1905, and controlled at least three quarters of the world market and employed eighteen thousand workers. In 1901 alone, the German industry printed twenty-two and a half million postcards.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, German publishers and agencies such as the Internationale Ansichts-Postkarten-Bureau in Weimar sent agents around the world in order to promote the industry and establish international business relations with overseas clients and stockists.<sup>58</sup>

On 7 March 1899, an advertisement in *Soerabaijasch handelsblad* announced the sale of postcards at the F. W. Krapp fashion and bridal store: 'Postcards with sights from Soerabaja in Java, 10c. each, 1 fl. a dozen. 100 for 7 fl. net' (figure 13).<sup>59</sup> Throughout the next month, the newspapers *Soerabaijasch handelsblad* and *De Locomotief* announced on thirteen occasions the arrival of the new set of postcards. Krapp had not previously advertised postcards and would not do so again. As the advertisement indicates, Krapp's usual assortment of goods did not usually include postcards, but the use of bold typography highlights their sale alongside a long list of available merchandise. It is safe to assume that these advertisements refer to the 'Groet uit Java' postcard series, especially since Krapp is identified as the publisher on the actual postcards.

Krapp's store was founded in 1882 at Passar Besar 25 – where the Salzwedel studio was also located at the time – before soon moving to one of the first two-storey buildings in the settlement at Passar Besar 5.<sup>60</sup> In 1908, the Krapp store was incorporated as Handelshuis F. W. Krapp, founded by a certain Ms. H. F. Schults, wife of Dr. Jur. P. Demcker of Berlin, Mr. P. Demcker himself, and a student from Heidelberg named as Mr. H. Krapp.<sup>61</sup> Although this information was published

54 – Sturani, 'Das Fremde im Bild', 13.

55 – Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, *Empires and the Reach of the Global 1870–1945*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2012, 86–88 and 15. See also David Prochaska, 'Thinking Postcards', *Visual Resources*, 17 (2001), 385.

56 – It reads P. Demcker and Ph. Schreiber, and not P. Denicker and Schreiber as mentioned in Bonneff and Grant, 'Bons baisers de Batavia', 74.

57 – H. J. Haverkate, *De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse prentbriefkaart: Deel II, Periode 1900–1918*, [Amsterdam]: Vereniging Documentatie Prentbriefkaarten 1987, 21 and 24.

58 – Ludwig Hoerner, 'Zur Geschichte der fotografischen Ansichtspostkarte', *Fotogeschichte*, 7:26 (1987), 40. In order to share the economic success of postcard production, many clubs such as the Vereeniging tot bevordering van de prentbriefkaarten-handel were founded in the Netherlands. J. D. C. van Dokkum, 'Een stukje geschiedenis van de prentbriefkaart', *Op de Hoogte* (May 1914), 265–72.

59 – See Krapp's advertisement in *Soerabaijasch handelsblad* (7–28 March 1899); and in *De Locomotief* (13 March 1899), n.p.

60 – 'De Geschiedenis van Toko Krapp', *Indische Courant* (31 October 1922), third sheet, n.p.

61 – See announcement in *Soerabaijasch handelsblad* (29 July 1908), n.p.

# F. W. KRAPP

## Passer Bezar

## Soerabaja.

**Modemagazijn, Atelier voor 't aanmaken van bruids-, wandel-en baltoiletten.**

<p>Sportblouses voor dames, allernieuwsten smaak, per stuk 2,95, 3, 4, 4,50, 5, 5,75 en 6,50.</p> <p>Vereen boa's in wit, malsgeel, lichtblauw, rose, grijs lichtbruin en marine, per stuk fl 4,25.</p> <p>Elegante strikjes en dassen voor dames van tulle en gaze de lise van af 1,20 per stuk.</p> <p>Hoedenlint, eene groote keuze per el 15 c., 20 c., 30 c., 40 c., en 50 c.</p> <p>Halfzijden, satijnen, wit, geel en zwart per el 65 c. andere kleuren à 95 c. per el.</p> <p>Mooie kwaliteit fluweel per el fl 1,35 en fl 1,75.</p> <p>Eene groote bezending opgemaakte, strooien dameshoeden, Parijsche mode in alle prijzen.</p> <p>Valencienne kant, wit, crème en geel van af 75 c. per pak van 16 el.</p> <p>Chantillij kant, zwart van af 28 c. per el.</p> <p>Eene groote bezending bladeren, als ook begonia-bladeren en slingers.</p> <p>Eene heele groote keuze voiles, wit en zwart, met en zonder moesjes per el 30 c. 35 c. 40 c. 45 c. en</p>	<p>hooger.</p> <p>Eene groot partij zijden volle-tulle, wit, crème en zwart, breed 28 c/m, geschikt voor kindersluier, voor 't opmaken van strikjesen dassen en hoedegarnituren enz. enz. <b>per el slechts 20 c.</b></p> <p>Stoffes voor Bal- en Bruidstoiletten in wit, crème, rose en lichtblauw.</p> <p>Balhandschoenen tot over den elleboog reikende van zijden glacé en Peau de Suède.</p> <p>Eene groote factuur broches, zilververgulde, waaronder ook de zoo gewilde Hoop, Geloof en Liefde.</p> <p>Vereen voor hoedegarnituren. Wit en geel dons.</p> <p>Zijden sjaals verschillende mooie patronen</p> <p>Naai-nécessaires, zeer geschikt voor de reis, per stuk 10 c.</p> <p>Laarsenknoopen met patent bevestiging zonder ze aan te naaien per kaart 10 c.</p> <p>Salon-zuilen en bijbehorende beelden, prachtige uitwerking</p> <p>Uitslagijzers voor handwerken.</p>
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**Briefkaarten met gezichten van Soerabaja en Java per stuk 10c., per doz. fl. 1.— en 100 stuks fl. 7 netto**

**5 pCt. Rabat à Contant, tegen rembours of bij vooruitbetaling.**

Figure 13. F. W. Krapp advertisement in *Soerabaijisch handelsblad* (25 March 1899), front page.

several years after the postcards' sale, it is plausible that the connection between Krapp and Demcker already existed in 1899. Since there appears to be only one series of postcards bearing their names, this joint enterprise seems to have been a one-time arrangement.

At the turn of the century, it was common practice to send images to Germany in order to have them printed as postcards. Several German publishers are mentioned on postcards in the KITLV collection and many advertisements announce the arrival of picture postcards in the Dutch East Indies.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore plausible that Krapp purchased Salzwedel's photographs from the local studio of Versnel and sent them to Germany, where they were used as the basis for the postcards printed in Esslingen and Stuttgart, before then being forwarded to Soerabaja. Postcards consisted of three layers: the printed image, the back side with imprinted address lines, and a piece of cardboard to stabilise the thin paper attached to the outer sides. The 'Groet uit Java' postcard in the Tropenmuseum collection has a Dutch-language back side which was used millions of times for postcards from the Dutch East Indies. However, the same series of postcards in the Atlas van Stolk collection in Rotterdam shows another back side with a bilingual Dutch–French inscription. This indicates that only the thin layer with the printed image was made in Germany and glued to the postcard's back side in Soerabaja.<sup>63</sup>

In Germany, the printing office of Greiner & Pfeiffer was responsible for producing the halftone prints of Salzwedel's photographs. Ernst Greiner had established the firm in the 1840s as a printing press and bookstore publisher in Stuttgart. In 1871, his son-in-law Carl August Pfeiffer joined as a partner and they changed the company's name to Hofbuchdruckerei Greiner & Pfeiffer. The press produced illustrated supplements for newspapers, bookplates, art prints, and electroplated and etched plates for letterpress printing.<sup>64</sup> Whether or not Karl Fuchs and Ph. Schreiber were responsible for drawing the illustrations from the photographic sources or supervising the entire printing process could not be determined. However, while no information could be found about Ph. Schreiber, Karl Fuchs (1872–1964) was a painter and graphic designer who lived in Esslingen and Stuttgart. He served an apprenticeship in lithography in the Stuttgart studio

62 – There are several announcements of the arrival of picture postcards; see for example Visser in *Java Bode* (16 December 1892), n.p.; H. Versnel in *Soerabaijisch handelsblad* (15 September 1900), n.p.; and G. D. de Vos & Co. in *Soerabaijisch handelsblad* (4 October 1905), n.p. For examples of German publishers in the KITLV Collection, see postcard inv. no. 1400206, published by Johannes Haacke, Berlin; postcard inv. no. 1400742, published by Kunstanstalt Chr. Neun, Darmstadt; and postcard inv. no. 1401071, published by Emil Aab, Barmen.

63 – From 1866, it was possible to print text on steam-powered printing presses in Java, and in 1883 the first rotary press was installed in Batavia. See Zubaidah Isa, 'Printing and Publishing in Indonesia, 1602–1970', PhD thesis, University of Indiana 1972, 39.

64 – Rudolf Schmidt, 'Greiner, E.; Pfeiffer, Carl August', in *Deutsche Buchhändler: Deutsche Buchdrucker*, vol. 2, Eberswalde: Eberswalde Schmidt 1903, 336.



65 – Kathrin Bauer-Dürr, *Karl Fuchs: Ein Esslinger Maler*, Esslingen: Stadtmuseum Esslingen 2005.

founded by Friedrich Federer (1819–53) and studied at the city's Academy of Fine Arts with the landscape painters Hermann Pleuer (1863–1911) and Otto Reiniger (1863–1909). Notably, Fuchs never apparently travelled to the Dutch East Indies. From the 1890s, he worked as a freelance illustrator and lithographer, and was well known for caricatures in the style of Wilhelm Busch for *Stuttgarter General-Anzeiger*. Fuchs made his living through the production of book covers, posters, framed vignettes, and postcards.<sup>65</sup> Indeed Fuchs designed several such postcards, many of them similar to the 'Groet uit Java' collage in style and composition. At least in southern Germany, Fuchs's postcard designs and style must have been well known at the turn of the century.

For Krapp in Soerabaja, it was both convenient to sell a set of German-made postcards and appealing to offer them to customers in the Dutch East Indies. In the KITLV collection, about fifteen hundred postcards extending from the late 1890s into the 1930s are tagged with the keyword 'Soerabaja'. The majority of these postcards were made after 1900 and printed as collotypes in black and white, of which a small number adhere to the 'Groet uit' formula in that they combine the phrase with two or three smaller pictures. Most of these postcards are printed as black-and-white halftones and there are no other multicoloured halftones in the collection. As such, the postcard series under analysis must have been perceived in Soerabaja as highly fashionable and indicative of the port's connections to Europe and the world – connections established through modern pictorial practices and the latest trends in the international postcard market. Krapp, Demcker, Fuchs, and Greiner & Pfeiffer demonstrate the international networks that manufactured the visual products of colonialism, one example of which eventually found its way to Dora Everard in Haarlem.

### Conclusion

Picture postcards produced a colonialist iconography to be sent around the world. In their combination of generic mass-reproduced images, specific captions, and personal messages, postcards represented the Dutch East Indies as an ideal paradise somewhere far away yet connected to the personal space of both sender and addressee. The traces of picture postcards' journeys from colony to metropolis rendered them reliable objects of knowledge that affirmed receivers' connections to the world. As travelling objects, picture postcards represented and were products of the 'imperial webs' of constant commercial and cultural traffic.<sup>66</sup> They established, visualised, and catalysed colonialism through their use of an international visual language. Picture postcards' complex visual economy demands a methodological shift from a national to a transnational approach, which questions readings that are limited by nation-state frameworks of analysis. The representation of Java in the 'Groet uit Java' postcard series adheres to this transnational image of colonialism and confirms its common iconography as the product of a well-connected international business industry.

Elizabeth Edwards has described how survey photography constituted 'a transnational cultural moment' because of the medium's capacity to create 'memory banks for the future'.<sup>67</sup> In this manner, photographic activity reflects both a transnational documentary impulse and a 'shared anxiety about the impact of modernity on both cultural practices and remains of the past through which identities might be negotiated'.<sup>68</sup> The role of photography as a transnational medium for memorialisation and knowledge formation is highly relevant to an understanding of the boom in the picture postcard industry around 1900. Despite their representation of local places and sights, postcards fulfilled a widespread desire among the European nineteenth-century bourgeoisie to know the world, collect souvenirs, and connect with friends and family. A critical focus on the postcard in its role as a commonplace, presumably 'innocent' representation of Dutch colonialism in Southeast Asia points to a shared ideology of Western

66 – Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories', in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2005, 3.

67 – Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photographic Uncertainties: Between Evidence and Reassurance', in *Transnational Memory*, ed. De Cesari and Rigney, 171.

68 – Ibid. See also Gregg Mitman and Kelley Wilder, 'Introduction', in *Documenting the World: Film, Photography, and the Scientific Record*, ed. Gregg Mitman and Kelley Wilder, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2016, 1–22.

supremacy as an inherent aspect of its visual banality. It is the banality of postcards, together with their status as cheap, mass-produced printed images, that has led to an absence of critical scrutiny. Postcards have slipped between the boundaries of academic disciplines such as art history and the history of photography.

In our case, national significance was attached to the images in Stuttgart and was only reinforced through the process of the postcards' delivery from colony to metropolis. In fact, this study of the history of the '*Groet uit Java*' series underscores the low level of the Dutch government's direct intervention in colonial representation and its inhabited spaces. Dutch colonialism in the nineteenth century has usually been regarded as driven by economic incentives and not by national imperialism. In this light, the production of Dutch colonialist postcards in Germany might be viewed as a reflection of the colony's irrelevance to nationalist ideologies of turn-of-the-century Holland. While imperialist ambitions were strongly associated with the national identities of the UK and France, Dutch colonialism has been characterised in contrast as a 'creeping annexation'.<sup>69</sup> Since the nineteenth century the Netherlands has downplayed its imperialist power and history in order to preserve its image as a small, relatively neutral country, especially compared to the UK, France, and Germany. This tendency continues to shape the perception of Dutch colonialism in the country to this day.<sup>70</sup>

In order to reevaluate this self-representation as a nonviolent and modest colonial power, I have emphasised the relevance of moving beyond methodologies based on nation-state frameworks. Instead, a critical transnational approach to Dutch colonialism's complex visual history reveals how the iconography of picture postcards continues to be charged with national significance. The postcards' circulation and considerable presence in national archives such as the Tropenmuseum confirms their role as both artistic representations and historical documents of Dutch colonialism, despite their transnational iconography and means of production. Such national collections of postcards and photographs continue to imply that subtle asymmetries of power between nations remain strong, especially since much of the visual material of the colonial era is absent from most archives in Indonesia today.

69 – Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'Dutch Expansion in the Indonesian Archipelago Around 1900 and the Imperialism Debate', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 25:1 (March 1994), 97.

70 – Vincent Kuitenbrouwer, 'Songs of an Imperial Underdog: Imperialism and Popular Culture in the Netherlands 1870–1960', in *European Empires*, ed. MacKenzie, 93.